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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)  
SUBJECT: EMBASSY RANGOON'S NOMINATION FOR THE 2009  
SECRETARY'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF  
COURAGE: PHYU PHYU THIN

REF: STATE 99729

NOMINATION AND JUSTIFICATION  
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¶1. (SBU) Embassy Rangoon is pleased to nominate Burmese HIV/AIDS activist Phyu Phyu Thin for the 2009 Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage. Phyu Phyu Thin has demonstrated great courage and leadership and overcome tremendous obstacles in advancing the cause of HIV/AIDS awareness and providing treatment and care to Burma's under-served HIV-positive population. A long-time member of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), Phyu Phyu Thin has been a leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS since NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi nominated her to take part in a United Nations program on HIV in 2002. Since then, Phyu Phyu Thin has worked tirelessly to address HIV/AIDS in Burma, establishing hospices for victims of the disease, conducting HIV/AIDS awareness and testing campaigns, and distributing life-saving anti-retroviral treatments.

¶2. (SBU) Phyu Phyu Thin faces tremendous obstacles in her work, including scarce resources and widespread ignorance about the HIV/AIDS problem. There are an estimated 600,000 HIV-positive people in Burma, which is one of the poorest countries in the region. Government funding for treatment programs is inadequate and the availability of donor support for anti-retroviral treatments is insufficient to meet the need. For many years public education about HIV/AIDS was almost non-existent.

¶3. (SBU) As a member of the NLD, Phyu Phyu Thin has encountered harassment, intimidation, and even arrest at the hands of Burma's military regime. In 2000, she and several of her colleagues were arrested and held for over four months after gathering at a Rangoon train station to bid farewell to Aung San Suu Kyi, who was taking a trip to upper Burma. In 2002 and 2003, Phyu Phyu Thin launched an HIV awareness campaign in Rangoon, but was soon pressured to stop by the regime. For several months following the peaceful pro-democracy protests in September 2007, Phyu Phyu Thin was forced into hiding after the regime allegedly sought her arrest. Many of Phyu Phyu Thin's colleagues remain in detention, including Aung San Suu Kyi, who first encouraged her to take up HIV/AIDS as a cause. In the face of these significant obstacles, Phyu Phyu Thin has demonstrated courage, poise, and an unwavering commitment to cause of HIV/AIDS awareness and treatment. She has overcome political, economic, and social obstacles to her mission and in so doing has inspired many to help make her country a better place for all. We strongly recommend Phyu Phyu Thin for this award as an exemplary woman of courage.

¶4. (SBU) Phyu Phyu Thin has consented to her nomination for this award.

## BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

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15. (SBU) Per State 99729, Phyu Phyu Thin's biographical details are as follows:

- Name: Phyu Phyu Thin (note: Burmese names cannot be broken into separate parts, so her name must always be read and written as a whole);
  - Job Title: HIV/AIDS activist and National League for Democracy member;
  - Date of Birth: 23 December 1971;
  - Country of Birth: Burma;
  - Citizenship: Burma;
  - Address: Withheld for security purposes, nominee can be contacted via Embassy Rangoon;
  - Telephone: Withheld for security purposes, nominee can be contacted via Embassy Rangoon;
  - E-mail: nominee does not have one; and
  - Passport number: nominee does not have one; additionally she told us she does not believe the government will issue her a passport to travel abroad.
- DINGER